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Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-11 FMC-04 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02

DLOS-07 SWF-02 DRC-01 L-03 /068 W
---------- 036031
R 231325Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3443
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL BOMBAY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 11223

PASS R.J. GAGE, OFFICE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES, MARITIME ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT, IN
SUBJECT: LASH

FROM SOMECK

1. ON 22 AUGUST, CHAIRMAN OF BOMBAY'S PORT TRUST GRANTED FINAL CLEARANCE FOR LASH VESSELS TO ENTER THAT PORT. AT PRESENT THIS CLEARANCE IS VALID FOR FAIR WEATHER OPERATIONS ONLY, THEREFORE THE FIRST LASH ELIGIBLE TO ENTER BOMBAY WILL BE THE HOUSTON IN OCTOBER. THE FAIR WEATHER PERIOD IN BOMBAY STARTS AROUND BEGIN-NING OCTOBER AND ENDS AT END APRIL.

2. AFTER THE PORT GAINS EXPERIENCE WITH LASH OPERATION IN FAIR WEATHER, THERE IS STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT PERMISSION WILL BE

OBTAINED TO OPERATE YEAR ROUND INCLUDING MONSOON PERIOD. IT IS SPECULATED THAT THE REASON FOR CLEARING ONLY FOR FAIR WEATHER WAS TO PRECLUDE INTRODUCING LASH TO BOMBAY DURING THE MONSOON AT WHICH TIME THE PORT IS MORE CONGESTED AND OPERATIONS MORE
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CHAOTIC THAN USUAL. WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS A VALID REASON IS MOOT.

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3. CLEARANCE WAS ALSO GRANTED ON CONDITION THAT COMPENSATION
BE MADE TO WINCHMEN AND RIGGERS DISPLACED BY THE NEW SYSTEM.
THIS PAYMENT SHOULD NOT EXCEED THREE RUPEES (PROBABLY LESS)
PER DEADWEIGHT TON OF BARGES LOADED AND/OR DISCHARGED IN BOMBAY.
IT IS NOT QUITE CLEAR WHETHER THE PAYMENT WILL BE CALCULATED
ON EACH TOTAL BARGE DEADWEIGHT IRRESPECTIVE OF THE AMOUNT OF CARGO
CONTAINED IN THE BARGE OR CARGO DEADWEIGHT ONLY, AND IF THE
LATTER, WHAT THE PAYMENT MIGHT BE FOR LOADING OR DISCHARGING
AND EMPTY BARGE. IN ANY EVENT, EVEN ASSUMING PAYMENT BASED ON
BARGE DEADWEIGHT, THE AMOUNT WILL NOT BE GREAT. PAYMENT WILL BE
MADE BY THE PORT TRUST WHO, IN TURN, WILL LEVY WATERMAN'S AGENTS.

4. UNRESOLVEDI
N ALL INDIAN PORTS IS THE QUESTION OF CUSTOMS
DUTY ON THE BARGES. APPARENTLY, IN THEORY, EACH PORT HAS THE
DISCRETION TO ALLOW DUTY FREE ENTRY AND DEPARTURE OF LASH BARGES
ON THE STRENGTH OF A LETTER OF GUARANTY FROM THE VESSEL
AGENTS. IT IS REPORTED THAT THIS IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE PORTS OF
KANDLA, CALCUTTA AND BOMBAY, BUT THAT THE LATTER TWO HAVE
REFERRED THE MATTER TO DELHI FOR CONFIRMATION. MADRAS MAY HAVE
DONE THE SAME AND COCHIN HAS TAKEN NO POSITION SINCE IT IS NOT
A SCHEDULED CALL FOR THE FIRST THREE VESSELS. BOTH WATERMAN'S
AGENTS AND THEIR DELHI REPRESENTATIVE ARE RELUCTANT TO PRESS FOR
A RESPONSE FROM DELHI FOR FEAR OF UPSETTING THE KANDLA DECISION
BEFORE THE FIRST SHIP CALLS THERE. THE ULTIMATE FEAR IS THAT,
IF PUSHED THE WRONG WAY, DELHI (CENTRAL BOARD OF EXCISE AND
CUSTOMS) MAY REQUIRE A BANK GUARANTY WHICH WOULD ENTAIL DEPOS-
ITING THE DUTY ASSESSED WHILST THE BARGE IS IN PORT.

5. ABOVE HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO ME THROUGH WATERMAN'S AGENT AND
EZRA KOLET, THEIR DELHI RREPRESENTATIVE. KOLET, RETIRED JOINT
SECRETARY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT MINISTRY, HAS BEEN HIGHLY
EFFECTIVE IN PAVING THE WAY FOR THE LASH INTRODUCTION TO INDIA.
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